

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 MOGADI 00747 231101 Z

54

ACTION AF-18

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 ADP-00 NEA-10 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07

H-02 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-03 RSC-01 PRS-01

SS-15 USIA-12 IO-12 ACDA-19 RSR-01 /150 W

----- 009891

R 231003 Z MAY 73

FM AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 863

INFO AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY NAIROBI

AMEMBASSY ROME

USCINCEUR

CINCLANT

C O N F I D E N T I A L MOGADISCIO 0747

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR SO ET US

SUBJ: SOMALI- ETHIOPIAN TENSIONS

1. SUMMARY: DURING TWO- HOUR LONG TALK WITH ME LAST EVENING MAY 22, SOMALI PRESIDENT SIAD MANIFESTED GRAVEST CONCERN -- EVEN CONVICTION -- THAT ETHIOPIANS WERE PREPARING PREEMPTIVE ATTACK ON SOMALIA. I HAVE NEVER SEEM HIM SO DISCOURAGED OR SO PESSIMISTIC. END SUMMARY.

2. HAVING JUST RETURNED TO POST THAT MORNING, I TOLD PRE- SIDENT THAT EMPEROR' S VISIT TO WASHINGTON HAD PROBABLY WORRIED HIM -- UNNECESSARILY SO, I THOUGHT. THERE WERE EVER RUMORS GOING AROUND MOGADISCIO THAT HAILE SELASSIE HAD GONE TO AMERICA TO GET PRESIDENT NIXON' S OK FOR INVASION OF SOMALIA. SIAD CONFIRMED.

3. I TOLD SIAD THAT BILATERAL TOPICS HAD PREDOMINATED WASH- INGTON DISCUSSIONS. HOWEVER, EMPEROR HAD INDICATED PROFOUND WORRY ABOUT SOMALI INTENTIONS, PARTICULARLY IN LIGHT RECENT
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 MOGADI 00747 231101 Z

SOVIET MILITARY DELIVERIES. WE DID NOT FULLY SHARE HIM'S ASSESSMENT AND HAD URGED ETHIO- SOMALI DIALOGUE. WHILE HAVING CLOSE AND FRIENDLY RELATIONS WITH ETHIOPIA, WE WERE PRIMARILY INTERESTED IN MAINTENANCE OF PEACE IN THE AREA. MOREOVER, WE DID NOT INTEND PROVOKE ARMS RACE IN HORN OF AFRICA OR PARTICIPATE IN ONE.

4. IN AN UNUSUAL SHOW OF BITTERNESS AND SCORN FOR EMPEROR (FOR WHOM HE HAD ALWAYS MANIFESTED VERY CONSIDERABLE RESPECT), SIAD SAID HAILE SELASSIE WAS SHEDDING "CROCODILE TEARS." ETHIOPIAN EMPEROR HAD SOLD A BILL OF GOODS TOO OFTEN TO THE WORLD, INCLUDING THE US. QUITE APART FROM FACT THAT HE (SIAD) HAD PLEDGED HIS OWN SOLEMN WORD TO PRESIDENT NIXON AND MYSELF THAT SOMALIA WOULD NOT MAKE WAR ON ETHIOPIA, IT WAS LUDICROUS, SIAD SAID, TO THINK SOMALIA WOULD OR COULD TAKE ON ETHIOPIA MILITARILY.

5. ALTHOUGH HE ADMITTED HE HAD NO PROOF, SIAD STATED HE HAD COME TO CONCLUSION THAT PRESENCE OF ETHIOPIAN MILITARY REINFORCEMENTS IN OGADEN, COMBINED WITH EMPEROR'S FEIGNED NERVOUSNESS AND SEARCH FOR MORE ARMS, PRESAGED PREEMPTIVE ATTACK. WESTERN PRESS CAMPAIGN AGAINST SOMALIA SEEMED PARTICULARLY SIGNIFICANT UNDER CIRCUMSTANCES. THERE WAS GRAVE DANGER THAT AS IN 1964 ETHIOPIA WOULD CLAIM SOME FORM OF SOMALI PROVOCATION AND AGAIN ATTACK SOMALIA. EMPEROR HIMSELF PROBABLY DID NOT WANT HOSTILITIES BUT WAS APPARENTLY LOSING GRIP. AMONG OTHERS, AKLILOU, KETEMA IFRU, AND GENERALS WANTED SHOWDOWN WITH SOMALIA AND WOULD COOK UP SOME CASUS BELLI. USG WOULD PROBABLY SWALLOW ETHIOPIAN VERSION AS IN 1964 AND GO ALONG. BUT SOMALIS WOULD FIGHT.

6. AS CONVERSATION BECAME MORE ANIMATED AND WE KEPT INTERRUPTING EACH OTHER, I FINALLY GOT IN THAT SOMALIS, INCLUDING THEIR PRESIDENT, SEEMED TO HAVE ENORMOUS INFERIORITY COMPLEX AND BELIEVED WORLD AGAINST THEM. IF SOVIETS COULD PREVENT SOMALIS FROM MAKING WAR AGAINST ETHIOPIANS (WHICH SIAD CONFIRMED), I SUSPECTED WE COULD DO SOMETHING TO DISCOURAGE ETHIOPIANS FROM ANY SIMILAR ACTION. OUR PEOPLE IN ETHIOPIA WERE CONVINCED THAT IEG WAS NOT REPEAT NOT PREPARING FOR HOSTILITIES. NOTWITHSTANDING, SHOULD SITUATION EVER CHANGE, USG WOULD NOT STAND IDLY BY, MUCH LESS ENCOURAGE, IF PRE-CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 MOGADI 00747 231101 Z

EMPTIVE ETHIOPIAN STRIKE WERE PREPARED AGAINST SOMALIA.

7. SIAD REITERATED THAT PRESENT SITUATION VERY DANGEROUS. DESPITE JIBES THAT HE WAS ORDERING SOMALI TROOPS TO "RUN AWAY," HE HAD ORDERED WITHDRAWAL OF SOME UNITS FROM ETHIOPIAN FRONTIER IN ORDER REDUCE CHANCE OF INCIDENTS. HE CONCLUDED BY STRONGLY PLEADING FOR US HELP TO DE-ESCALATE TENSIONS AND AVERT WAR.

8. IN RESPONSE TO MY QUESTIONS, SIAD REFUSED TO BE DRAWN OUT AS TO IF AND WHEN HE WAS GOING TO ADDIS FOR SUMMIT. HOW- KUA EVER, I URGED STRONGLY THAT HE KEEP HIS SHIRT ON AND GO TO ADDIS IN ENDEAVOR RESUME DIALOGUE WITH EMPEROR WHOSE STATESMANSHIP AND GOOD SENSE WOULD CERTAINLY PREVAIL.

9. COMMENT: ADMITTEDLY, GIVEN PRESENT MOOD OF BOTH SOMALI AND ETHIOPIAN LEADERS, AGGRAVATED BY CURRENT HASSLE OVER OAU AGENDA, CONSTRUCTIVE DIALOGUE WILL BE DIFFICULT ACHIEVE. MOREOVER, SIAD'S APPARENTLY GENUINE FEARS OF ETHIOPIAN MENACE TO SOMALIA LIKELY MAKE HIM MORE INSISTENT THAN EVER IN PUTTING ALL SOMALI- ETHIOPIAN DIFFERENCES ON TABLE. NEVERTHELESS, STILL BELIEVE WORTHWHILE ENCOURAGE BOTH LEADERS GET TOGETHER IN EFFORT REDUCE CURRENT TENSIONS.
LOORAM

CONFIDENTIAL
NMAFVVZCZ

*** Current Handling Restrictions *** n/a

*** Current Classification *** CONFIDENTIAL

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts:
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 23 MAY 1973
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: golinofr
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1973MOGADI00747
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: RR
Errors: n/a
Film Number: n/a
From: MOGADISHU
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1973/newtext/t19730552/aaaajpyz.tel
Line Count: 133
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE
Office: ACTION AF
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: golinofr
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 27 SEP 2001
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <27-Sep-2001 by smithrj>; APPROVED <16-Nov-2001 by golinofr>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: <DBA CORRECTED> gwr 980227
Subject: SOMALI- ETHIOPIAN TENSIONS
TAGS: PFOR, ET, SO, US
To: ADDIS ABABA
AF
CINCLANT
MOSCOW
NAIROBI
ROME
SECSTATE WASHDC

USCINCEUR

Type: TE

Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005